



## United States Department of the Interior

### BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Rock Springs Field Office  
280 Highway 191 North  
Rock Springs, Wyoming 82901-3447



In Reply Refer To:  
4700  
(WYD03), (WYD04)

**FEB 19 2010**

### **Scoping Notice**

### **For Gathering & Selective Removal of Wild Horses in the Adobe Town & Salt Wells Creek Horse Management Areas (HMAs) Population Management Action**

#### **Description of Project**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Rawlins and Rock Springs Field Offices propose to gather excess wild horses from the Adobe Town & Salt Wells Creek HMAs. The most recent population surveys conducted revealed approximately 1,950 horses residing within the two adjacent HMA's (see enclosed map). Census data for these HMAs was collected July 20-23, 2009 and wild horse populations are exceeding the appropriate management levels (AMLs) in each HMA. The AML range for the Adobe Town HMA is 610-800 wild horses and the AML range for the Salt Wells Creek HMA is 251-365 wild horses.

The gather operations would include helicopter drive trapping. This capture method utilizes a helicopter to herd wild horses into a temporary trap. Gathering is anticipated to start on or about October 1, 2010. The project may utilize a fertility control vaccine. The analysis may include review of the sex ratios.

#### **Relationship to Existing Plans and Documents**

The proposed action is in conformance with the Rawlins Resource Management Plan (RMP) approved on December 24, 2008, the Great Divide Resource Area Wild Horse Herd Management Area Evaluation, May 1994 and the Green River RMP approved on August 8, 1997.

Management objectives for wild horses include providing for the protection of the rangeland resource, while maintaining a self-sustaining, healthy population of wild horses on the public land in those areas where horses existed at the time the Wild Horse and Burro Act was passed. The Salt Wells Creek HMA contains mixed land ownership with public and unfenced private lands. Wild horse numbers were agreed upon with private land owners. The Green River RMP allowed for public participation in the developing the AML. Wild horse HMAs were established and confirmed through the RMP planning process.

The proposed management action is in conformance with the August 2003 Consent Decree upheld by the United States District Court of Wyoming. The Consent Decree is an out of court settlement agreement between the State of Wyoming and the United States Department of the Interior, BLM. This agreement specifies that when information is gathered that indicates that an HMA within the State of Wyoming is determined to be over the established AML, the BLM has one year from discovery to remove wild horses to the low range of AML.

### **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**

To comply with NEPA and the Council on Environmental Quality regulations, the BLM is required to prepare an environmental analysis. The environmental document will serve several purposes. It will provide both the public and governmental agencies with information about the potential environmental consequences of the project and alternatives; identify all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the project and alternatives; and provide the responsible official with information upon which to make an informed decision regarding the project. The document will be prepared by an Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) of BLM resource specialists.

One essential element of the NEPA process is scoping. Scoping activities are initiated early in the process to: identify reasonable alternatives to be evaluated in the environmental analysis; identify environmental issues of concern related to the proposed gather; determine the depth of analysis for issues addressed in the environmental document, and identify potential mitigation.

Known resource issues or potential conflicts include: recreational activities such as hunting, wild horse viewing; special status plants species; wildlife, historic trails; oil & gas drilling; fertility control vaccine, and livestock grazing.

This scoping notice has been prepared to describe means by which governmental agencies, the general public, and other interested parties may participate in and contribute to the analysis process. Public input is important in establishing the scope of analysis for any NEPA document, and the BLM encourages public participation.

### **Timing Requirements**

The public is encouraged to participate throughout the environmental analysis process to help in identifying the level of analysis needed, alternatives to the proposed action, other issues or concerns that should be analyzed, mitigation opportunities, and any other comments or ideas to help ensure the completeness of the analysis process.

Your comments are important and will be considered in the Environmental Analysis process. **Comments are due by April 2, 2010.** Please note that public comments submitted for this scoping review, including names, e-mail addresses, and street addresses of the respondents will be available for public review and disclosure at the addresses below during regular business hours (8:00a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except holidays. Please submit your comments to:

Melanie Gilbert, Wild Horse & Burro Specialist  
BLM, Rawlins Field Office  
1300 N. Third Street  
Rawlins, Wyoming 82301  
(307) 328-4200  
Fax: (307) 328-4224  
E-mail: melanie\_gilbert@blm.gov

or

Jay D'Ewart, Wild Horse & Burro Specialist  
BLM, Rock Springs Field Office  
280 Highway 191 North  
Rock Springs, Wyoming 82901  
(307) 352-0256  
Fax: (307) 352-0329  
E-mail: jay\_d'ewart@blm.gov


(Please include "Adobe Town & Salt Wells Creek HMA's Scoping Comments" in the subject line.)


This scoping notice and all other future documents corresponding with this action will be posted on the Wyoming BLM website at:

<http://www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/info/NEPA/rfodocs/at-sw2010.html>

The web-site can be accessed by the general public. The environmental assessment (EA) will be posted to this site after comments from the public are incorporated. The estimated time of posting of the EA is July 1, 2010. You may also obtain a paper copy of these documents by contacting the Rawlins or Rock Springs Field Office at the addresses or phone numbers listed above.

Sincerely

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lance C. Porter  
Rock Springs Field Manager

  
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for Patrick Madigan  
Rawlins Field Manager

Enclosure:

cc: Interested Public